

Wildlife Division PO Box 200701 Helena MT 59020-0701 December 21, 2007

#### Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is requesting public comment on hunting season structure proposals adopted as *Tentative* by the FWP Commission at its December 20 meeting.

The information below represents adopted Tentatives for:

- Υ 2008-2009 Hunting Season Dates
- ° 2008-2009 Deer, Elk, Antelope, Moose, Sheep, Goat and Black Bear Quotas
- $\Upsilon$  2008/2009 Lion Seasons and HD Boundaries

- $\gamma$  2008-2009 Black Bear Seasons, HD Boundaries and Quotas

With the exceptions of the changes listed below, 2007 regulations are being reproposed for 2008 and 2009. For further clarification you may call 444-2612 or visit the FWP website at <a href="fwp.mt.gov">fwp.mt.gov</a> on the home page under "Recent Public Notices". Additionally, 44 public meetings are scheduled at locations across Montana throughout much of January. That meeting schedule is enclosed.

Please send your comments to: FWP – Wildlife Division, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701 or email <a href="mailto:fwpwld@mt.gov">fwpwld@mt.gov</a>. The deadline for public comment to be received is 5:00 PM on Friday, February 1, 2008. The Commission will take final action on these Tentative adoptions at its February 20, 2008 meeting in Helena.

## Changes adopted as Tentative by MFWP Commission on December 20, 2007.

## **Statewide**

## **Hunting Season Dates**

Alternative 1: Dates set using traditional process Alternative 2: Fixed dates regardless of day of week. Proposed dates attached.

#### Quotas

Adjust annual license and permit quota setting for deer, elk, antelope, moose, sheep, goat and bear to biennial. Proposed ranges would be adopted biennially by Commission with annual FWP adjustments only within adopted range. Proposed ranges attached.

## **Deer**

## Region 1

**HD 170** - Adjust boundary of deer/elk HD 170 **and** increase 170-10 OTC antlerless white-tailed deer license limit per hunter from 1 to 5.

Implement Libby Archery Only Hunting Area.

Eliminate Antlerless Mule Deer Permits 100-60, 103-60, 104-60, 121-60, 122-60, 123-60.

Replace with the following Antlerless Mule Deer B Licenses:

•	
100-01	50 licenses
103-01	50 licenses
104-01	50 licenses
109-01	25 licenses
121-01	50 licenses
122-01	50 licenses
123-01	25 licenses.

Eliminate Old Steel and Stillwater hunting closures.

Licensed hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" (PTHFVP) added to youth 5-week either sex white-tailed deer opportunity where present.

### Region 2

**HD 212** - Expand antierless mule deer B licenses (212-00) to all of HD 212 and increase to 100.

**HD 214** - Implement unlimited mule deer buck permits.

**HDs 202, 210, 212, 213 and 216** - Eliminate antlerless white-tailed B licenses 202-02, 210-00, 212-01, 213-00, 216-00.

HDs 291, 292, 293 and 298 - Create new deer/elk HD 298 comprised of HD290, and portions of HD's 292, 291, and 293. In portion of HD298 designate Special Weapons Restriction Area corresponding with current HD290 where hunting for deer will continue to be Archery Only. Existing season structure and dates for HD 290 would continue in that corresponding Special Weapons Restriction Area of HD 298. Within remaining portion of proposed HD 298, FWP proposes to establish the following deer hunting season structure:

Sep 6 – Oct 19 -- Either-sex White-tailed Deer. Archery Only Season. Oct 26 – Nov 2 -- Either-sex White-tailed Deer.

Oct 26 – Nov 30 -- Either-sex White-tailed Deer. Only Youth ages 12-15.

Nov 2 – Nov 30 -- Antlered Buck White-tailed Deer.

Special Permit. Drawing only. Apply by June 1.

002-10: Single Region B license for White-tailed deer valid in HD 298.

298-40: Unlim. Permits. Permit must be used with a valid Deer A License.

Holders may not hunt Antlered Buck Mule Deer in any other HD.

- Sep 6 — Oct 19 — Antlered Buck Mule Deer. Archery Only Season.

- Oct 26 - Nov 30 -- Antlered Buck Mule Deer

## Region 3

**HD 309** - Expand HD boundary.

HDs 309, 311, 312 and 393 - Clarify/adjust HD boundaries.

**HD 339** - Adjust HD boundary.

**HD 388** - Adjust HD boundary **and** increase 388-10 OTC antlerless mule deer B license limit per hunter from 1 to 7.

## Region 4

**HDs 413 and 445** – implement 500 antlerless white-tailed B licenses valid in HDs 413 and 445 (445-01).

**HDs 421** - Implement general ES mule deer season for all of archery and rifle seasons in all of HDs 421.

**HD 423** – Eliminate "off of National Forest" limitation relative to ES mule deer harvest.

## Region 5

**HDs 500, 570 and 580** - Implement general ES mule deer season for all of archery and rifle seasons in all of HDs 500, 570 and 580.

**HD 530** - Implement general deer license valid for antierless mule deer for all of archery and rifle seasons in all of HD 530.

## Region 6

HDs 600, 610 and 690 - Incorporate parts of deer/elk HD 610 into HDs 600 and 690. 550 antlerless mule deer B licenses valid in new HD 600 and 550 antlerless mule deer B licenses valid in new HD 690. HD 610 will be eliminated.

**HDs 640, 641 and 670** - Incorporate parts of deer/elk HD 640 into HDs 641 and 670. Season structures in adjusted HDs 640, 641 and 670 will remain as they currently are.

HD 641 – Implement 100 antlerless mule deer B licenses

**LPT 698-00 nonresident and 699-00 resident** antlerless white-tailed deer B licenses to be combined into one 699-00 with 5000 licenses available.

# **Elk**

## Statewide

Adjust elk archery to limited elk archery permits where elk rifle permits are currently limited. HDs include: 410, 417, 620, 621, 622, 700, 701 (Missouri River Breaks EMU) and 401, 403, 411, 412, 420, 425, 426, 441, 447, 450, 455, 500, 502, 510, 511, portion of 520, 530, 570, 575, portion of 580, 590, 702, 704 and 705. Additionally, these areas are proposed to have area-specific unlimited antlerless elk archery permits available through the drawing. In the Missouri River Breaks districts, archery is currently available via unlimited permit. In the other areas, archery is currently available on only a general license.

Under this proposal, other season elements would remain unchanged unless specifically addressed in other proposals. Archery permit applicants would apply first, second or third choice and may hunt elk in other areas/times but may not use the archery permit in the described district during the general rifle season. Rifle permit holders may use a bow during the archery season in the described district. Proposed permit numbers would be fixed and represent 75% of average of 2005, 2006 and 2007 total permit holders (Missouri River Breaks) and 90% of average of 2004, 2005 and 2006 number of estimated total archers (2007 data unavailable).

Archery permits that represent 75% of average of total permits #s from 2005-2007 are:

**HD 410/417**: 1800 **HD 620/621/622**: 1250 **HD 700/701**: 820

Archery permits that represent 90% of average of total estimated archer #s from 2004-

**HD 401/403**: 90

2006 are:

**HD 411/511/530**: 620

HD 412: 140 HD 420: 70 HD 425: 110 HD 426: 30 HD 441/450: 140 HD 447: 330

HD 455: 40 HD 500: 80 HD 502/510: 50

**Portion of HD 520**: 80

HD 570: 50 HD 575: 90 HD 580-23: 40 HD 580-24: 60 HD 590-23: 360 HD 590-24: 190 HD 702/704/705: 440

Elk permit waiting period: Implement 4-year waiting period for those limited entry ES elk permits with drawing odds 10% or less. Landowner preference would be excluded from waiting period. Using 2007 statistics, the 4-year wait would then apply to:

282-20

283-20

310-20

313-11

313-12

313-13

339-20

362-11

380-20

401-20

410-20 425-20 441-20 447-20 500-20 502-20 620-20 621-20 622-20 631-20 632-20 690-20

## Region 2

Offer unlimited A9/B12 licenses over-the-counter for archery only during the archery only season region-wide. Commit to monitoring nonresident participation relative to 10% cap intent and consistency. The archery A9/B12 283-80 would be **eliminated.** 

**HD 202** - Eliminate antlerless permits 202-02.

HDs 204, 261 and 270 - Replace A7 licenses with antlerless permits in HDs 204, 261 and 270. General license antlerless harvest in HDs 204, 261 and the north half of HD 270 would close when a quota of 200 cow elk from HD 270 is checked at Darby Check Station. General license antlerless harvest in the south half of HD 270 would close when a quota of 300 cow elk from HD 270 is checked at Darby Check Station. Proposed antlerless permits are:

HD 204-00 5 permits
HD 261-00 25 permits
HD 261-01 valid only north of Birch Creek 50 permits
HD 270-00 75 permits
HD 270-01 125 permits

- HDs 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 216, 282, 283, 284,285 and 290 Replace antiered bull regulation with brow-tined bull. Either sex would be stated as brow-tined bull or antierless.
- HDs 210, 212, 213, 215, 216, 281, 283, 285, 291, 292 and 293 Implement 7 day general license brow-tined bull or antlerless elk harvest from third Monday to fourth Sunday of rifle season and eliminate A9/B12 in HD 213 and combine 212-00 and 212-01 into 212-00 valid for all of HD 212. Propose antlerless permits are:

210-00 200 permits 212-00 300 permits 213-00 150 permits 215-00 150 permits, 215-01 50 permits 216-00 25 permits, 216-01 100 permits 281-00 100 permits 285-20 50 permits, 285-21 200 permits 283-00 250 permits 291-00 100 permits 292-00 150 permits 293-0 50 permits

- HDs 240 and 250 Eliminate all A7 licenses in HDs 240 and 250 and adjust HD 240 and 250 general season to season-long brow-tined bull with 200 antlerless elk permits in HD 240 and 50 antlerless elk permits in HD 250 (valid only in northeast portion of district).
- **HD 280** Start brow-tined bull or antlerless season in backcountry HD 280 September 29 instead of start of general season.
- **HD 282** Replace A7 licenses with 75 antlerless elk permits.
- **HD 283** Adjust boundary of 283-02 for antlerless permits in Rattlesnake Wilderness Area.
- HDs 291, 292, 293 and 298 Create new elk/deer HD 298 comprised of HD290 and portions of HDs 290, 291, 292 and 293. Designate the East Ovando Archery-only Area as a weapons restricted area for elk hunting. General archery and rifle season would be brow-tined bull or antlerless elk with 100 total A9/B12 licenses offered via the drawing.

Licensed hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" added to general elk license youth opportunities where present.

### Region 3

- **HD 300** Implement 5 week ES general season **and** 250 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing.
- **HD 301** Reduce brow-tined bull general season from 5 weeks to the first two weeks of general rifle season.
- **HD 310** Implement unlimited brow-tined bull permits for archery and rifle seasons.
- HD 312 Implement 100 A9/B12 licenses valid on private lands through drawing.
- **HD 314** Implement 1000 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing and replace ES season
  - with brow-tined bull or antlerless season.
- HDs 315 and 393 Implement unlimited A9/B12 licenses and commit to monitoring nonresident participation relative to 10% cap intent and consistency. In HD 314 replace either sex season with brow-tined bull or antlerless.
- **HDs 319 and 341** Reduce brow-tined bull or antlerless general season to 2 weeks from third Monday to fifth Sunday of general rifle season **and** add brow-tined bull or antlerless permits in 319-10 (300 permits) and 341-10 (175 permits).
- **HDs 320 and 333** Implement 5 week brow-tined bull or antlerless general season and 800 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing.
- **HD 321** Implement 5 week ES general season **and** eliminate ES permits 321-00.
- **HDs 322-327 and 330** Implement 5 week brow-tined bull or antierless general season **and** 3000 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing.
- **HD 328** Implement 5 week ES general season.
- **HD 329** Reduce either sex general season to 2 weeks from third Monday to fifth Sunday of general rifle season **and** add 350 ES permits.
- **HD 331** Reduce either sex general season to 2 weeks from third Monday to fifth Sunday of general rifle season and **add** 400 ES permits.
- HDs 360 and 362 Implement Madison Special Management Area and 200 antlerless permits (398-10) for use with general license or A9/B12 (398-80) in Madison Special Management Area for five 7-day intervals (40 permits per period). Hunt Orientation required for permit validation. Access conditions addressed at Hunt Orientation. Would eliminate all late hunts and remove private land designation of A9/B/12 licenses. Adoption called for expanded Special Management Area.

Licensed hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" added to general elk license youth opportunities.

## Region 4

- **HD 410** Reduce antlerless elk permits (410-00) from 400 to 200 **and** reduce either sex elk rifle permits (410-20) from 75 to 55 **and** eliminate A9/B12 licenses (410-80) **and** eliminate general license antlerless elk hunting for youth.
- **HDs 413, 418, 432 and 454** Implement 5 week ES general season with A9/B12 licenses through drawing **and** eliminate antlerless licenses.
- HDs 418 and 448 Adjust boundary between HD 418 and 448 (for elk and deer).
- **HD 417** Increase antlerless elk permits (417-00) from 350 to 400 **and** issue 300 A9/B12 antlerless elk licenses (417-80) through drawing. A9/B12 licenses valid south of the DY Trail and Knox Ridge Rd and exclude the CMR refuge.
- **HD 422** Implement 350 total A9/B12 licenses (422-80) through drawing and valid throughout HD.
- HD 425 Eliminate either sex permits (425-20) and implement additional week of antlerless permits. Adjust antlerless permit levels as follows: 425-00: 25 permits

425-01: 30 permits 425-02: 35 permits 425-03: 35 permits

- **HD 442** Implement 400 total A9/B12 licenses (442-80) through drawing and valid throughout HD.
- **HD 448** Implement full 5-week antlered bull season (remove 9-day ES) **and** increase antlerless permits (448-00) from 100 to 200.
- **HDs 449 and 452** Implement 5 week ES general season.
- **HD 450** Increase antierless permits from 30 to 50 and remove A9/B12 licenses.
- **Region 4 Multi-District A9/B12** Limit total A9/B12 licenses to 2200 through drawing. Valid in all R4 districts except 401, 410, 411, 412, 417, 420, 422, 441, 442, 447, 448, 450, and 455.
- **HDs 401, 403, 412, 417, 426, 441, 447** Youth (12 15) General License Antlerless Elk opportunity; Licensed hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" added.

#### Region 5

- **HD 520** Convert antlered bull permits (520-40) to either sex (520-21).
- **HD 540** Implement 5 week ES general season **and** eliminate antierless permits **and** implement 50 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing only valid on Private and DNRC lands and not valid on FWP Wildlife Management Areas.
- **HD 560** Implement 50 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid west of the Main Boulder River outside Natl Forest Boundary.
- **HD 580** Increase existing total A9/B12 licenses through drawing from 150 to 300.
- HD 590-80 Implement 65 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid in HD 590 north of Yellowstone River and portion of HD 701 north of Yellowstone River, south of HWY 12 and west of Sumatra-Myers Road.
- **HD 590-81** Implement 35 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid in HD 590 south of Yellowstone River.

Hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" added to general elk license youth opportunities.

## Region 6

- **HD 620** Allow antlerless permits in HDs 621 and 622 to be valid in HD 620 and eliminate antlerless permits 620-00.
- **HD 621** Implement 100 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid in HDs 621 and 620 during archery and rifle season **and** allow antlerless elk rifle permits in HD 621 to be valid for all of HD 621 in one LPT 621-01 (550 permits)
- **HD 622** Implement 300 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid for HDs 622 and 620 during archery and rifle season.
- **HDs 620, 621 and 622** Allow youth antlerless elk rifle permits (621-00) to be valid for all of HDs 620, 621 and 622 during the 3-day early youth season, and throughout the following general season.
- **HDs 630, 631 and 632** Allow youth antlerless elk rifle permits (631-01) to be valid for all of HDs 630, 631 and 632 during the 3-day early youth season, and throughout the following general season
- **HD 630** Implement 100 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid for HDs 630, 631, and 632 during archery and rifle season.
- HDs 680 and 690 Eliminate 680-80 antlerless A9/B12 licenses (50) and increase the 690-80 antlerless A9/B12 licenses from 100 to 200, also valid in HD 680. Also make 690-00 Youth antlerless permits (25) valid in HD 680 and add 50 antlerless elk permits in HD 690 for the General Rifle Season (690-01), also valid in HD 680.

## **Antelope**

## Statewide

Replace unlimited 900 archery antelope licenses to 4500 licenses available through the drawing (Regions 3-7). This number would be fixed and represents approximately 90% of 3-year average of 2005, 2006 and 2007 total permit holders.

Adjust total number of antelope licenses an individual may hold to three, only one of which may be an either sex license. This would allow an individual to potentially purchase three surplus antelope licenses.

#### Region 2

**HD 291** - Add new hunting district 291 with 3 either sex licenses (291-00) and 5 doe/fawn licenses (291-10) with same boundary as Deer/Elk HD 291.

## Region 3

- **HD 310** Increase 310-00 Either-sex licenses from 175 to 200 and 310-10 Doe/fawn licenses from 100 to 150.
- **HD 311** Adjust boundary where doe/fawn licenses are valid to include portion of HD South and West of Interstate 90.
- **HD 338** Offer successful antelope ES 338-00 applicants opportunity to purchase a single Doe/Fawn 338-30 license valid in 338 during the Archery Only Season and the General Antelope Season.
- **HD 341** Add 75 Doe/Fawn licenses (341-10). Single licenses will be offered to successful Either-sex Antelope license holders in this HD.
- **HD 380** Adjust boundary to accommodate new HD 388 **and** eliminate a series of licenses (380-01) which were formerly valid in the area proposed to be the new 388.
- **HD 381** Adjust boundary to accommodate new HD 388 **and** eliminate Doe/Fawn licenses **and** adjust Either Sex permit level to 25.

HD 388 - Create new HD 388 with 50 Either Sex licenses (388-00) and 100 Doe/Fawn licenses (388-20). Hunting restricted to archery equipment, shotgun, traditional handgun, muzzleloader or crossbow only, EXCEPT on lands that are specifically excluded from the weapons restrictions. Map available at FWP and license providers in Helena

## Region 5

HDs 570, 571 and 572 - Combine the three adjacent antelope hunting districts into a new HD 570. Hunters who draw an either sex antelope license in HD 570 may be given the opportunity to purchase up to two additional doe/fawn licenses depending on population levels.

## Region 6

**HDs 620 and 690** - Adjust the boundary between HD 620 and 690 to conform to Boundaries for Deer/Elk HDs 621, 680 and 690.

## **Mountain Lion**

## <u>Statewide</u>

Set harvest quota during Fall Season Without Dogs no more than 20% of total district(s) quota.

Allow any lion license holder to hunt without dogs during Fall Season in any lion HD with an open Fall Season. This would eliminate validation requirement for Fall Season.

Adjust limited entry language. The title "Permit" would be eliminated. Hunters would either purchase a lion license over-the-counter in general quota areas OR apply for/obtain a lion license via the drawing in limited entry areas.

Implement bonus point system for limited entry license application.

#### Region 2

Replace the quota system in Region 2 with a limited license drawing system.

Eliminate Blackfoot Special Lion Permit Area (BLSPA). Lands formerly encompassed by the BLSPA would be incorporated into HD 292 and the proposed new HD 298. Lion quota levels would be managed consistent with the current season structure; a quota of 4 male lions annually harvested in the combined HDs 298 (proposed), 292, and 291.

#### **Upland Game Bird**

#### Statewide

Youth pheasant weekend proposed for weekend before general pheasant opener.

Clarify that falconry limits are NOT in addition to hunting bag and possession limits.

#### Region 1 (Turkey)

**Lincoln County** – Implement over-the-counter either sex licenses for Fall Season **and** propose 400 Gobbler permits for Spring.

**West Sanders County** – Implement over-the-counter either sex licenses for Fall Season **and** propose 300 Gobbler permits for Spring.

**East Sanders County** – No Fall Season **and** propose 10 Gobbler permits for Spring.

### Region 2 (Turkey)

Mineral County – Implement Fall Season with permits and increase permits as follows:

282-20: Issue 25 Male Turkey Permits for Spring Season

(Shotgun/Archery Only)

282-50: Issue 25 Either-sex Turkey Permits for Fall Season

(Shotgun/Archery Only)

**Missoula County** - Implement Fall Season with permits **and** increase permits as follows:

283-20: Issue 50 Male Turkey Permits for Spring Season

(Shotgun/Archery Only)

283-50: Issue 50 Either-sex Turkey Permits for Fall Season

(Shotgun/Archery Only)

**Ravalli County** – Remove Ravalli County from General License Area in regulations; maintain permit structure for Fall.

## Region 3 (Turkey)

**HD 365** – Implement new HD that is Lewis and Clark and Broadwater Counties (Lower Missouri Unit); **Spring permits** would be 20 (365-20) and 2 (365-21); **Fall permits** would be 25 (365-50) and 2 (365-51).

**HD 375** - Implement new HD that is Gallatin County and Madison County east of Madison River (Gallatin County Unit); **Spring permits** would be 5 (375-20) and 2 (375-21); **Fall permits** would be 10 (375-50) and 2 (375-51).

**HD 385** – No change.

HD 395 – Implement new HD that is Beaverhead, Silver Bow, Jefferson Counties and Madison County west of Madison River (Upper Missouri Unit); Spring permits would be 15 (395-20) and 2 (395-21); Fall permits would be 20 (395-50) and 2 (395-51).

#### Wolf

# <u>Statewide</u>

Regulations attached. Only structure with numbers addressed with separate future process. Contingent upon delisting process.

## **Moose**

#### Region 2

HD 210 - Convert antlerless moose licenses to Either Sex.

**HD 211** - Eliminate antlerless moose licenses.

**HD 214** – Convert antierless moose licenses to Antiered Bull.

HD 215 - Convert antlerless moose licenses to Either Sex.

## Region 3

**HD 302** – Reduce antierless licenses from 5 to 1 and antiered bull licenses from 5 to 4.

**HD 334** – Adjust season and license structure to the following:

Sep 15 – Nov 30 5 Either Sex (334-00)

Nov 15 – Dec 15 6 Antlerless (334-11)

**HD 390** - Implement new hunting district 390 (West Big Belt Mountains). Two Antlered Bull licenses (390-20) recommended.

## Regions 4 and 6

**HD 600** - Implement new hunting district 600 (Hi Line). Two Either Sex licenses (600-20) recommended.

# **Sheep**

## <u>Statewide</u>

Implement archery only season for limited entry sheep licenses to run for 10 days prior to the start of any district's general sheep season opener. This would not include HD 301 or the unlimited entry districts.

### Region 1

**HD 121** – Implement 10 adult ewe licenses (121-30).

#### Region 3

**HD 301** – Re-open and implement 5 any ram licenses

#### Region 5

**HDs 500, 501 and 502** – Adjust boundaries of HDs 500 and 501 **and** create new HD 502. Season would be unlimited license sale with harvest quota of 2 legal rams.

**HD 503** – Adjust license structure from (503-10) 3 Legal Ram licenses to (503-00) 3 Either Sex licenses.

## Region 6

HDs 620 and 680 – Expand HD 680 Either Sex licenses to be valid in HD 620 also.

**HD 622** - Increase the size of HD 622 by incorporating deer/elk HD 631 **and** implement 5 adult ewe licenses valid in Mickey and Brandon Buttes area (portion of HD west of the Renolds Hill Road).

## Goat

#### Region 2

**HD 212** – Propose to close district to all goat hunting.

## Region 3

**HD 321** – Propose to close district to all goat hunting.

**HD 322** – Propose to close district to all goat hunting.

## **Black Bear**

No changes proposed.

<u>Game Damage</u>
No quota changes from 2008. Clarify that game damage quotas apply to management seasons and convert to biennial process.